



JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR.  
*Governor*

GARY R. HERBERT  
*Lieutenant Governor*

## State of Utah Department of Commerce Division of Consumer Protection

FRANCINE A. GIANI  
*Executive Director*

JASON PERRY  
*Deputy Director*

### **MEDIA ALERT** **August 31, 2005**

#### **Utahns Urged to Help Hurricane Victims But Warned of Scams**

*(For immediate release...)*

**SALT LAKE CITY, Utah --** Disasters bring out the best and worst in people and Utah's Division of Consumer Protection is joining Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., in urging the state's citizens to provide assistance to Hurricane Katrina's victims, but at the same time warning of fraudulent or misleading charitable solicitors who may want to profit from the generous spirit and heart of Utah citizens.

"Don't automatically say yes when asked to give money or buy an item in the name of those affected by Katrina," said Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce and Consumer Protection Francine Giani. "We are already beginning to get the phone calls from responsible citizens wanting to know if those they are being contacted by are registered charities. Utahns have a tradition of stepping up to help others and that's something we can take pride in, but in the coming hours and days don't let that empathy be used against us."

The Utah Division of Consumer Protection registers and monitors all charities in the state and offers this advice as we move as a nation into this period of responding to this natural disaster:

1. Know the charity. Never give to a charity unless you know its history, purpose and reputation.
2. Listen closely to the name of the charity. Before contributing, be sure the name is one you know and respect. Watch for copycat names that closely resemble a well known charity.
3. Do not be fooled by a hard-luck tale. Base contributions on factual, relevant information only.
4. Request information. Ask exactly how the charity plans to assist the victims.
5. Listen for disclosures. Ask telephone solicitors to tell you the name of the company which employs them. Be suspicious of anyone who does not volunteer or provide this information.
6. Verify filing with the Utah Division of Consumer Protection. State law requires that, except for certain excluded groups, organizations which solicit contributions in Utah must file with the division. Visit [www.dcp.utah.gov](http://www.dcp.utah.gov) to view a list of registered charities in Utah. Or call 801.530.6601.
7. Do not give cash. Instead, write a check payable to the charity, not the individual solicitor.